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**Working Families Still Being Left Behind by Bush Administration
Economic Policies, Finds Annual Report by JEC Democrats**

Washington, D.C. – Working families have been left behind since the start of the recovery from the 2001 recession and they continued to be left behind in 2005, according to the **Ranking Member's Views of the Joint Economic Committee 2005 Annual Report** released today.

“The President’s claim at his news conference today that his policies are focused on the priorities of average Americans will come as news to most working families,” said **Sen. Jack Reed** (D-RI), Ranking Democrat on the **Joint Economic Committee** (JEC). “The economy has grown this year, but the benefits of that growth continue to show up in the bottom lines of companies rather than in the paychecks of workers. Programs that help ordinary Americans cope in difficult economic times have become candidates for budget cutting in order to fund tax cuts for the wealthiest. Meanwhile the problems of large budget and trade deficits and the economic insecurity felt by many American families remain unaddressed,” said Sen. Reed.

The Ranking Member’s Views of the JEC 2005 Annual Report finds that the signature policies of the Bush Administration and the Republican Congress have not addressed the problems facing ordinary American families. Successive rounds of tax cuts were poorly designed to stimulate job creation and produced a legacy of large budget deficits. Those large and persistent budget deficits contributed to an ever-widening trade deficit and massive borrowing from abroad. Most of the benefits of the tax cuts accrued to very high-income taxpayers, while – as the budget reconciliation process has demonstrated – cuts in programs that benefit middle- and lower-income families and further borrowing are being used to pay for those tax cuts.

Policymakers faced challenges in 2005 from the devastation to the Gulf coast from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the cost of the war on terrorism. Unfortunately, there has been no change in the priorities or policies of the Bush Administration and the Republican Congress to address the problems facing the country’s most disadvantaged citizens or to help ordinary working families deal better with job and retirement insecurity and the rising costs of energy, health care, and education for their children.

Instead of sound budget policies aimed at preparing for the imminent retirement of the baby-boom generation, the Bush Administration and the Republican Congress have refused to adopt the kinds of budget enforcement rules that helped achieve fiscal discipline in the 1990s; have pursued an open-ended commitment to rebuilding Iraq that relies on supplemental appropriations rather than the normal budget process; and have remained committed to extending tax cuts that will add further to the budget deficit.

The Joint Economic Committee, established under the Employment Act of 1946, was created by Congress to review economic conditions and to analyze the effectiveness of economic policy.